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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/910,544	07/20/2001	Roberto Ayala	YOR920010274US1/I31-0004	2135

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12/09/2008

EXAMINER

OBEID, FAHD A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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12/09/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/910,544	Applicant(s) AYALA ET AL.	
	Examiner FAHD A. OBEID	Art Unit 3627	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 September 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14-69 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-50 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 51-69 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Application

1. **Claims 51-69** are pending in this application.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 09/30/2008 has been entered.

Preliminary Remarks

3. This is in reply to application filed on 09/30/2008.
4. Claims 53, 54, and 62 have been amended.
5. Claims 51-69 are currently pending and have been examined.
6. Please take notice that the examiner handling this application has changed. The new examiner is Fahd Obeid.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 51-69 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lidow (US 2002/0194057).

As to claims 54 and 62, Lidow shows aggregating demand received by an enterprise server, from enterprise site (comprising customers associated with the enterprise), the demand comprising materials requirements from each site (see e.g., para. 0018, lines 1-5; Fig. 6, 100; para 160); generating an unconstrained forecast from the aggregating (comprising summing the demand forecasts from the customers as in par. 0018, lines 5-8; Fig. 7, 138); transmitting the unconstrained forecasts to the suppliers (e.g., par. 0018, 8-11; par. 0019, 1-3; Fig. 6, 116, 118; Fig. 7, 142, Fig. 8, 154); receiving supplier capability statements from the suppliers (par. 0019, suppliers reply in lines 1-6; Fig. 7, 142; par. 0165, lines 13-18; Fig. 8, 154; par. 0166, lines 14-20); generating a constrained forecast (par. 0019, lines 6-7- customers change their demand forecast; Fig. 6, 120; Fig. 8, 158; par. 0167, lines 7-11 -a new demand forecast created which is constrained by supplier capabilities); and transmitting the constrained forecast to the suppliers.

Lidow does not show that the received supplier capability statements are forwarded by the enterprise site.

However, forwarding a supplier capability statement is notoriously old and well known in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill of the art to modify the method of Lidow by having the supplier capability statements forwarded by the enterprise site in order to keep the group "in the loop" regarding supplier status.

Paragraph [0051] clearly shows aggregation and projected forecast from a group of customers (enterprise sites).

Paragraph [0167] shows that when demand is higher than capacity, there is a process for resolving the difference. One of the steps is to use customer intervention 158 to constrain the forecast in order to resolve the capacity/demand issue. One possibility disclosed is postponed delivery (equal or less to unconstrained forecast).

Lidow's Procurement Module formalizes the commitment or agreement made as a result of capacity/demand resolution.

Paragraph [paras 18, 152, 165-167] shows the unconstrained forecast does not take into consideration any resource constraints and the constrained forecasts are sent to only the suppliers who provided the formal commitment.

Alternatively, as to claims 54 and 62 Lidow shows aggregating demand received by an enterprise server, from enterprise site (comprising customers associated with the enterprise), the demand comprising materials requirements from each site (see e.g., par. 0018, lines 1-5); generating an unconstrained forecast from the aggregating (comprising summing the demand forecasts from the customers as in par. 0018, lines 5-8); transmitting the unconstrained forecasts to the suppliers (e.g., par. 0018, 8-11 ; par. 0019, 1-3); receiving supplier capability statements from the suppliers; generating a constrained forecast; and transmitting the constrained forecast to the suppliers.

Lidow does not show that the received supplier capability statements are forwarded by the enterprise site.

However, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to have the suppliers send it to the enterprise site and then have it forwarded, since the specification does not state that this particular method of transmission is for a particular purpose or solves any particular problem, and it appears that the method would function equally well either way.

As to claim 51, Lidow does not explicitly show providing a formal commitment to produce the supply.

However, to do so is notoriously old and well known in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method of Lidow by providing a formal commitment in order to provide evidence of a meeting of the minds and to clarify communications.

As to claims 52, 55, 57, 63, and 65, it is noted that Lidow shows all elements. As to claims 59-61, and 67-69, Lidow shows all elements except using a constraint based optimization tool running a squared set analysis; producing a squared set build plan; and inputting the build plan into an MRP tool.

However, to do so is notoriously old and well known in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method of Lidow by using a constraint based optimization tool running a squared set analysis; producing a squared set build plan; and inputting the build plan into an MRP tool in order to produce a material needs forecast.

As to claim 53, Lidow shows all elements except using an MRP system to generate the forecasts.

However, it is notoriously old and well known in the art to do so. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the arts to modify the method of Lidow by using an MRP

system to generate the forecasts in order to provide for more efficient use of resources. It is also included in applicant's own disclosure. See paragraph 0005.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In particular the applicant argues that: a) the unconstrained forecast does not take into consideration any resource constraints and the constrained forecasts are sent to only the suppliers who provided the formal commitment.

In response to a) examiner respectfully disagrees. Applicant is reminded that claims must be given their broadest reasonable interpretation. Lidow teaches that “the supply chain server receives forecasts from the customers detailing the orders that the customer desire” (para 0018), also (fig. 6 data flow 100, and paras 0152 and 0160). After receiving the forecasts, they are “consolidated, translated into supplier part numbers, and transformed into specific supplier requirements” (para. 0152) and (fig. 6, activity 112, and fig. 7 steps 130, 134, 136, and 138, and paras 0163-0165).

These consolidated forecasts for specific supplier requirements are the unconstrained forecasts that do not take into consideration any resource constraints.

Lidow also states that the forecasts from the customers are validated (“analyzed by the supply chain server to ensure that they conform to contractual agreements and do not contain errors” para 0018), they are not constrained in the context of this process. The claimed process and the process of Lidow deal with providing unconstrained forecasts, checking the capability of

the suppliers to provide the requested items, and providing constrained forecasts based on the capability of the suppliers to provide the requested items.

The consolidated unconstrained forecasts do not take into consideration any resource constraints are then transmitted to the suppliers in order to determine whether the forecast demand is greater than the supplier's capacity.

Lidow states, "The supply chain server queries whether the aggregated customer demand is greater than the supplier capacity. Supplier capacity may be determined from data supplied by the suppliers to the server or by suppliers allowing access to their respective databases "(para 0165).

Upon the determination that demand is greater than supply, the Lidow begins the "constrained supply planning routine" (para 0166) shown in fig. 8.

If demand cannot be successfully redistributed and it is determined that demand is still greater than supply, intervention with the suppliers occurs (fig. 8 step 154, para 0166) it is noted that the content of the forecasts is further communicated to the suppliers in this step.

Upon a further determination that demand is greater than supply, the "supply chain server communicates with customers to ascertain any possible customer flexibility (e.g., part substitutions, early or postponed delivery) to thereby produce a new customer demand" (para 0167).

This new customer demand provides the constrained forecast since it is the result of and is constrained by the capability of the supplier to provide the part (fig. 6 data flow 120, fig 8 step 158, and para 0019 lines 6-7).

After the resolution of the supply issues, "when supply issues have been resolved, the customer's demands are sent to the suppliers in groups so that the suppliers need to prepare a smaller number of large orders" (para 0019).

In allocate supply routine, "the parts which actually are available from suppliers (constrained parts) are allocated equally among the demanding customers"(paras 0166-0167). Therefore, Lidow still meets the scope of the limitation as currently claimed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to FAHD A. OBEID whose telephone number is (571)270-3324. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 8:00am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ryan Zeender can be reached on 571-272-6790. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Fahd A Obeid/
Examiner, Art Unit 3627
12/06/2008

/F. Ryan Zeender/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3627